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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000803

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SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: VICTIMIZED MP DOWNPLAYS TSVANGIRAI LINK IN PRIVATE  
EVEN AS HER FACTION UPS PUBLIC HYPE

REF: HARARE 791

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher Dell for reasons 1.5 b/d

11. (SBU) Pro-Senate MDC MP Trudy Stevenson on July 7 told USAID local staff member that she did not believe the anti-Senate leadership ordered the July 2 attack on her and four other pro-Senate officials (reftel). Recovering at home and in high spirits, she said it was even possible that the GOZ had paid unemployed youths in the MDC to attack her. Nonetheless, she admitted that her pro-Senate faction was "making a song out of it." (N.B. For instance, pro-Senate MDC spokesman Gabriel Chaibva was quoted in the state-controlled The Sunday Mail as stating that the anti-Senate faction's alleged involvement was a "conspiracy against the people of Zimbabwe.")

12. (SBU) Stevenson also gave a readout of her son's July 3 meeting with anti-Senate faction leader Morgan Tsvangirai. She said the opposition leader had expressed his outrage at the incident. Tsvangirai had pledged to her son that the party would set up a commission to investigate the attack and would expel any party members found guilty. Stevenson also acknowledged that many of the anti-Senate MDC leaders had visited her to express their sympathies and to condemn the violence.

13. (SBU) The USAID local staff member also met July 9 at the Ambassador's direction with Tsvangirai with a message that the opposition leader needed to be more forceful and public in his condemnation of the attack. Tsvangirai told the staff member that the ruling party was to blame for creating a culture of violence through years of GOZ manipulation and destruction of rule of law in Zimbabwe. That said, he condemned violence in general and said that his party had issued two press statements condemning this incident in particular. However, Tsvangirai said he recognized that the allegations were a diversion from his party's campaign

against the GOZ and promised a swift investigation and, if necessary, expulsions.

¶4. (SBU) Irene Petras, one of three lawyers assigned to the anti-Senate MDC's investigation commission, on July 10 told an Embassy local staff member that the committee met over the weekend for the first time and charted the course of their investigations. The commission hoped to interview the victims on July 11 and had applied to receive copies of the police records of the event. Petras promised to update Post as events unfolded.

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Comment  
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¶5. (C) Regardless of Stevenson's private message to us disassociating the anti-Senate MDC leadership from the incident, the pro-Senate faction of the MDC is definitely hyping the attack in a clear effort to score political points. Although early indications suggest that MDC youths may in fact have carried out the attack, we have seen nothing to suggest that the anti-Senate faction condoned it. Moreover, it is entirely plausible that the GOZ may have paid unemployed MDC youths to stage the attack. The Ambassador plans to meet with Tsvangirai July 10 (septel) to press the point that the opposition leader needs to be more outspoken in condemning the attack.

DELL